

Generic Case Instructions

PAI 786 - Urban Policy
Professor Yinger

This memo provides instructions for the students with responsibility for running one of the case discussions for this class. These instructions are expressed in general terms so that they can be applied to all the cases.

1. The class session should be set up as a hearing or meeting of some type in which the decision stated by the case must be made. The hearing need not be something specified in the case, but it should focus on the same decision as the one on which the case is based.
2. The students responsible for the case should divide into groups, one of which is the group running the hearing and the others of which are defined by interest groups in the case.
3. The group running the hearing is responsible for time management and for making the decision at the end. The students in this group may want to step out of the room briefly at the end of the discussion and then return to announce their decision. They may also want to pose questions to the other groups after their presentations.
4. Examples of interest groups (without reference to any particular case) include representatives of city agencies, people from HUD, advocates for the homeless, and so on. The interest groups must be relevant for the issues in the case but need not literally be mentioned in the case. Most cases mention many groups, however, so you are likely to have many groups to choose from. The idea is for each student to make policy arguments from the perspective defined by his or her group. (You are encouraged to have some fun with this role playing, so long as you do not lose touch with the substantive issues.)

5. The class should be organized to give the rest of class, that is, the students who are not officially responsible for the case under discussion, an opportunity to participate. For example, the members of the class (i.e. the audience at the hearing) could be given the opportunity to ask questions of the people who make presentations (either right after their presentations or at the end of the hearing).
6. The organization selected by the students should be designed to (among other things) encourage conversation, both among the students responsible for the case but playing different roles and between the students responsible for the case and the other students in the class. The more debate the better!

The group running the class should leave 15 or 20 minutes at the end for the professor, who will comment on the discussion and on the substantive issues in the case.